November 2008

ROCK BARRIER

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service—Practice Code 555

ROCK BARRIER

A rock barrier is a retaining wall constructed of rock across the slope to form and support a bench terrace on sloping land.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

Rock barriers are applicable to sloping land suitable for cultivation where the soil depth is adequate for benching. The slopes can be as much as 50 percent, which means each l00 feet across the slope would have an elevation difference of approximately 50 feet. Therefore, this practice can provide acceptable stability on very steep cultivated soils.

The purpose of a rock barrier is to stabilize steeply sloping land to allow cultivation with an acceptable level of erosion. In addition to erosion control, the practice provides improved water use efficiency and other favorable hydrologic effects. Rock barriers require careful design, layout, and construction.

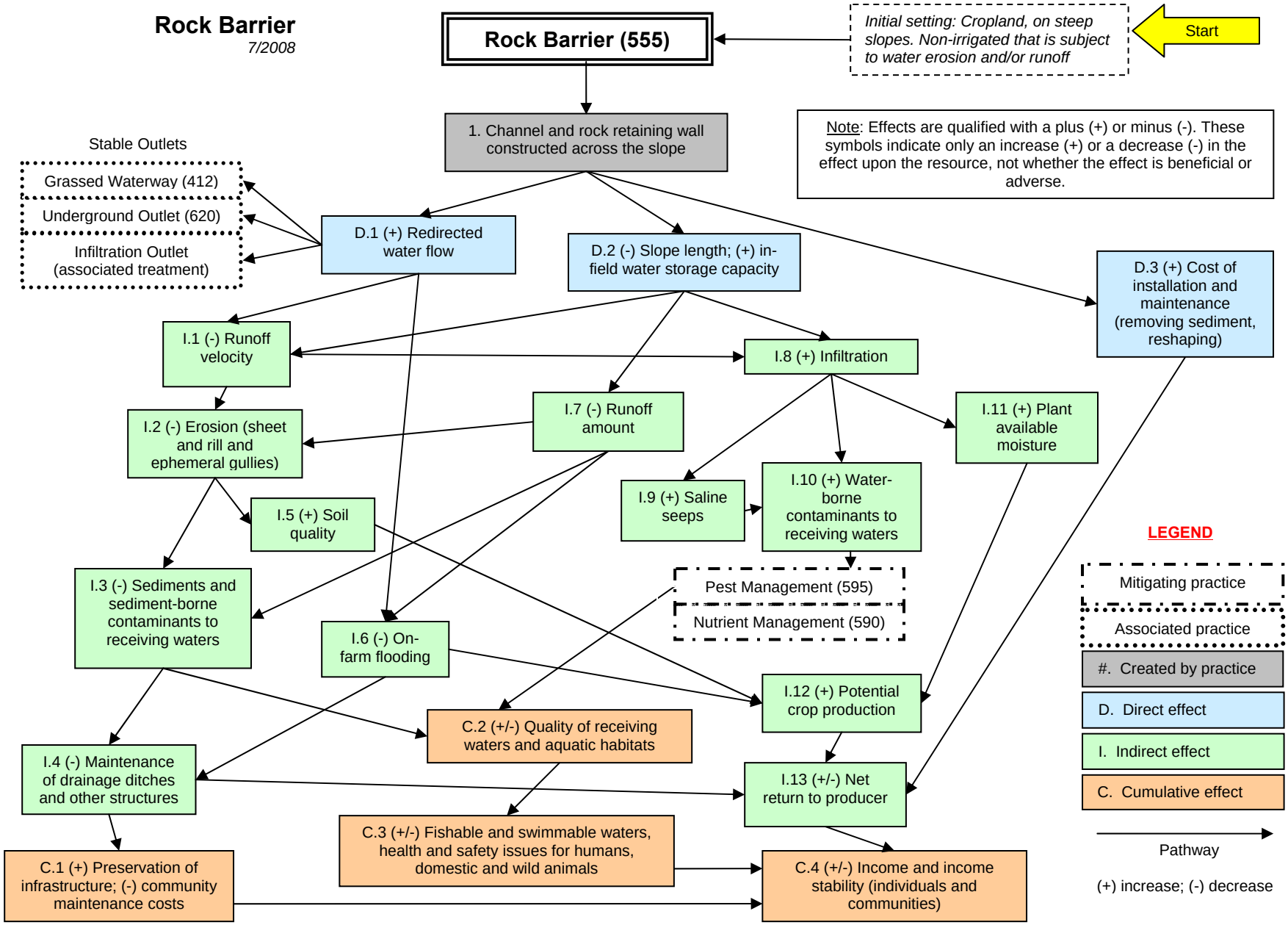
COMMON ASSOCIATED PRACTICES

Rock Barrier is commonly used in a Conservation Management System with other conservation practices such as:

- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
- Residue Management (344)
- Grassed Waterway (412) and other stable outlets
- Underground Outlet (620)

For further information, refer to the practice standard in the local Field Office Technical Guide and associated practice specifications and job sheets.

The following page identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowner and are presumed to have been obtained. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.



The diagram above identifies the effects expected to occur when this practice is applied according to NRCS practice standards and specifications. These effects are subjective and somewhat dependent on variables such as climate, terrain, soil, etc. All appropriate local, State, Tribal, and Federal permits and approvals are the responsibility of the landowner and are presumed to have been obtained. All income changes are partially dependent upon market fluctuations which are independent of the conservation practices. Users are cautioned that these effects are estimates that may or may not apply to a specific site.